

Approved by
the Select Board on:

9/13/2021

SELECT BOARD JOINT MEETING WITH WARRANT COMMITTEE, CAPITAL BUDGET COMMITTEE AND
SCHOOL COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2021

REMOTE MEETING

7:00 PM

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: October 6, 2021
TIME: 2:45 PM

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Select Board was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Adam Dash. Vice Chair Roy Epstein and Select Board member Mark Paolillo were present, along with Town Administrator Patrice Garvin, Assistant Town Administrator Jon Marshall, Senator William Brownsberger and Representative Dave Rogers.

Amy Checkoway, Chair of the School Committee, called the School Committee to order with a quorum.

Ann Marie Mahoney, Chair of the Capital Budget Committee, called the Capital Budget Committee to order with a quorum.

Laurie Slap, Chair of the Warrant Committee, called the Warrant Committee to order with a quorum.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Second Time of Use Forum sponsored by the Belmont Municipal Light Board will be held remotely on Sept. 23rd.
- Donations for those displaced at the 125 Trapelo apartment building can be made at bit.ly/125Trapelo. All displaced residents have been placed at temporary residences. Dash thanked all the groups who helped support the displaced residents.

ACTION BY CONSENT

Adam Dash opened the public hearing.

- Representative Dave Rogers said that this is a discussion about the ARPA funding that was allocated directly to municipalities, but there is a separate process that he and Senator Brownsberger are working on at the State level regarding the \$5.3B funding that needs to be allocated by 2024 and spent by 2026. He announced that there will be a series of public hearings at the State House in September and October 2021 to discuss this funding. He announced they are working with the Town Administration to identify other local funding sources for Belmont and they are also identifying funding priorities for the new infrastructure federal bill.

Public Forum – American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Patrice Garvin presented: Public Forum on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021

- Garvin announced that the Belmont funding eligibility period is March 2021 to December 2024. The Town is receiving \$7.8M from the Coronavirus Local Stability Fund in two allocations. The Town is also receiving \$1M from the Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief Fund III

(ESSER) III. Funds do not need Town Meeting appropriation.

- Eligible uses for ARPA funding:
 1. Public Health expenditures and negative impact from COVID, ie, medical expenses and mitigation efforts for businesses, households and the public sector.
 2. Replace lost public sector revenues. The Town has calculated \$5M in COVID lost revenues.
 3. Provide premium pay for essential workers.
 4. Investment in water sewer and broadband infrastructure.
- Garvin said her presentation tonight will focus on categories 1 and 2 above.
- ARPA funding comes in two allocations: \$2.8M for Direct Municipal Allocation and \$5M for County Allocation. Town received the direct municipal portion of \$1.3M on July 1, 2021. We anticipate the second allocation in July 2022. The Town recently received \$2.5M of the County Allocation. The second County Allocation is anticipated August 2022. This federal funding should not be used to fund recurring expenses.
- FY21 expenses were covered by last year's ESSER and CARES Act funding for Town and schools. Since we used these funds in FY21, it was decided that no ARPA funds will be used in 2021 for COVID related expenses. Free Cash certification will be reported soon.
- The FY22 budget did not include COVID related expenses. The Town is looking to identify one-time COVID related expenses outside of the FY22 and FY23 budget. The biggest need is to address the anticipated FY23 structural deficit of \$6 to \$8M.
- For FY22 and FY23 the potential uses of ARPA money have been identified as: Testing/vaccines, cleaning and ventilation improvement, senior outreach, personnel costs, capital discretionary, affordable housing, high school building project, and business relief.

Superintendent Phelan presented: FY22 Federal ESSER II and III budget proposal

- Prioritizations for funding use are: academic recovery, mental health recovery, equity for underserved students, professional development.
- The amount of federal funding received by Belmont Public Schools:
 - ESSER II - \$456,001 (must be expended by 9/30/23)
 - ESSER III – 1,002,359 (must be expended by 9/30/24)
 - There are two potential strategies for expenditure:
 - Option 1: Two-year plan to expend all the ESSER II and III funding equally in FY22 and FY23.
 - Option 2: One-year plan to expend the full amount of ESSER funds in FY22. If Town needs funds from schools in FY23, then schools would expend total \$1.4M in ESSER II and III in FY22.
 - A COVID Parking Lot budget was identified for potential spending needs. Some of the needs identified were: Tents for expanded lunch space, COVID testing, booster shots, PPE and filters for ventilation, services for hospital or home-bound students, and additional technology specialists. Total amount: \$978,175

- The ESSER II grant application included: Summer 2021 academic recovery costs, two Social Workers, two math specialist, professional development for staff. Total funding: \$456,001.
- The ESSER III grant application included: Academic recovery costs, additional nurse, technology integration specialist, two para-professionals for METCO, two social workers for high school and Chenery, transitional educator to support high school students with mental health needs, and substitute teachers. Total funding: \$1,002,359.
- These costs could be expended in a one- or two-year program based on the needs of the Town. These are all temporary positions that will not be recurring items in operating budgets.

Dash opened up the discussion to committee members:

- Jenny Fallon asked why personnel and contract negotiations could be included as one-time funding item, rather than ongoing since they are personnel related?

Garvin replied that the FY22 budget had to be reduced due to override so one-time revenues needed to be identified to sustain the FY23 service budget. The only funds available were free cash or ARPA money. After discussion with committee members, ARPA money was designated to be used to cover the FY23 structural deficit.

- Jack Weiss said it seems that Garvin is saying that ARPA money is being used for recurring expenses to avoid incurring those losses next year.

Garvin replied that due to the pandemic we had less revenue so they are using relief funds to cover that temporary situation.

- Laurie Slap said we are going to have to keep FY24 budget in plain sight. She said they will be using the new modeling software to keep on top of future budget needs.

Dash opened the meeting to public comments:

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Bill Anderson asked if it was fair to say that the FY23 budget exceeds available and projected revenues?

Garvin replied there is money in stabilization accounts. She said the Town needs to further evaluate the budget before they determine the free cash amount that can be used.

Sean Murphy asked if slides could be put in a pdf file and posted online.

Jon Marshall said he would do that ASAP.

Michael McNamara, Town Meeting member, said he would like to see funds used to offset some costs for needy residents and support for small businesses.

Supt. Phelan answered McNamara said last year a free lunch was supplied to all students. Next year, working with state and federal government, there will also be free breakfast and lunch.

Kathryn Venzke, owner of Helena's clothing store, and member of Belmont Economic Development Committee, reported that the Economic Development Committee sent a letter to the Select Board to

ask that COVID relief money be used for business assistance. They requested 4% of funding based on Belmont's average business tax support base.

Rachel Heller, Town meeting member, Co-chair of the Housing Trust, said there is a need for affordable housing in Belmont. One-time funds are a perfect way to invest in affordable housing and redevelopment for public housing stock.

Marie Warner asked about if the \$2.4M that the school turned back was included in the figures tonight?

Garvin replied that the amount has not yet been certified with Department of Revenue and it was not yet included in the figures. Marie She also suggested that funds could be used to fund tunnel construction on Alexander Ave

Deran Muckjian, owner of The Toy Shop, and member of the Economic Development Committee said a lot of small businesses are still struggling. Any help to small businesses would be appreciated.

Kathy Keohane, Vice-chair, Library Board of Trustees reported that the electrical needs in library are dire. Ventilation is bad and she is suggesting that outlets be added.

Ann Marie Mahoney asked if funding could also be used for HVAC work in other Town buildings?

Margaret Moran suggested considering funding for no-cost/low-cost wi-fi for subsidized housing residents.

Emma Thurston commented that the Economic Development Committee hopes to work with the Select Board to find bullet points for business relief efforts.

Kathy Keohane reported that the library has secured grant money for free mobile hot spots and they are working with key groups to distribute to needy families.

- Dash announced that there are have been 51 participants. He thanked everyone for their participation and reiterated the importance of the participation of public and committee members. The link to the Q&A and slides have been posted on the Belmont Media website.

The School Committee motion to adjourn was approved by quorum.

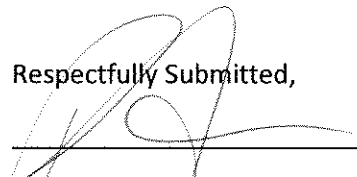
The Capital Budget Committee motion to adjourn was approved with a quorum.

The Warrant Committee motion to adjourn was approved with a quorum.

The Select Board motion to adjourn was approved with a vote of 3-0.

Next Select Board Meeting: Monday, August 30, 2021 at 7:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted,



PATRICE GARVIN, Town Administrator